

Basic principles of Krishna Conscious Home Schooling

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Home schooling should be a part of a Krishna conscious lifestyle, not that Krishna consciousness is one aspect of home schooling. A Krishna conscious lifestyle should be the focus of homeschooling. We should be inspired to raise our children as good devotees instead of focusing only on their scholarly achievements. Srila Prabhupada's books are of a very high caliber, and so if we base our curriculum on his books, academic achievement will naturally follow. What does this Krishna conscious lifestyle for children really mean? Prabhupada explains this very simply.

“Simply follow the program of the elders, let the children associate as much as possible with the routine Krishna conscious program, and when the others go out for working and business matters, the children can be given classes.”

This is what we tried to do in our homeschooling. The children lived at home just as they would in the gurukula, with a few adjustments. We did our own morning program, and after breakfast prasadam we studied the Bhagavatam for two to three hours everyday. This became a major part of our home schooling curriculum, and through the Bhagavatam we covered many subject matters. After our study, we applied all that we learned through practical daily activities. We did preaching activities such as giving classes at local schools, writing and rehearsing for plays, organizing festivals, Deity worship, distributing books at local events and harinam. There was never a dull moment--homeschooling was so full of a variety of activities that there was no time for anything else.

Srila Prabhupada's idea for the education of our children was to make them well-rounded devotees, who are expert in the sastras, eager to give Krishna to others, and steady in their own practice. In one lecture he says, “We are interested to open school if there is education for Krishna consciousness . . . But we are not interested in so-called godless education. That is not our business.” Since Krishna is the source of all knowledge, if we understand and love Him, then knowledge will naturally follow. Everything comes from Krishna, material or spiritual. This is why Srila Prabhupada emphasized spiritual education as the goal of education. He says that Srimad Bhagavatam has everything that is needed to understand the material and spiritual worlds. Srila Prabhupada's vision for the children was that they not only receive academic education but that they also develop godly character. In order to have good character one must have God in the center; otherwise, there is no impetus to check one's actions. Krishna has all these wonderful qualities, such as kindness, knowledge, peacefulness,

and forgiveness and a godly person can also develop these qualities. Good character comes from living a pure and simple life dedicated to hearing and chanting the holy names, which is the basis of all learning. Since the main purpose of home schooling is to raise a Krishna conscious child, therefore a Krishna conscious lifestyle is the most important basis of home education.